

A Parent's Perspective on System of Care



ABOUT UTAH'S SYSTEM OF CARE

System of Care is a coordinated approach to service delivery for children, youth and families with complex behavioral, medical and mental health needs. This collaborative approach strives to keep children and youth safely in their homes, schools and communities through service delivery that is family driven, youth guided, strength and community-based, trauma informed and culturally competent. System of Care is implemented in the western region (Juab, Millard, Summit, Utah and Wasatch Counties) and will be fully implemented in the northern region (Box Elder, Cache, Davis, Morgan and Weber Counties) by June 2016. System of Care will be implemented statewide by June 2017.

Jamie's Family

In May 2015, Jamie was at rock bottom. Her life had been unraveling bit by bit for the last seven years after the death of her oldest son. Shortly after that tragedy, her son was court ordered into DCFS custody after his elementary school principal reported he was suicidal. He has been in and out of foster care is currently on probation and living at home. Trying her best to keep her family together, Jamie felt isolated and alone. She hated going out in public in their small town because she knew that her son was being accused of vandalism and mischief. She felt powerless in a situation beyond her control until she was referred and accepted into the Department of Human Services' new System of Care program.

Almost immediately, Jamie's life took a turn for the better. She was surrounded by a team of caring professionals and supportive friends. Rather than telling her what her son needed, they gave her a voice in his care. They listened when she said he needed to be living at home in her care, and they helped make that possible by enlisting community support and engaging counselors and teachers at her son's school. The school has been a vital support and his special education teacher and counselor are making it possible for him not only to attend, but also succeed at school by shortening his required schedule and picking him up and taking him home each day. His counselor and teacher also focused on his aptitude for electronics and technology, which has increased his confidence along with improving his social skills.

Every day is still a challenge, but Jamie is encouraged by the progress they are making each day. In her words: "Our family is healing."

The System of Care manager and family support specialist meet with Jamie and her family on a regular basis along with her son's probation officer, and school officials. A nonprofit community provider, Families First, taught Jamie and her husband methods to improve family functioning.

Jaime believes the System of Care team gave her support, understanding, and especially, they gave her hope. With the skills she is learning, she says she finally feels strong enough to hold her head up in the community. She knows she is not alone. Every day is still a challenge, but she is encouraged by the progress her family is making each day. In her words: "Our family is healing."

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